

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****March 3, 2015**

Page 1 of 3

**SUBJECT: UTILIZATION OF TWO-PERSON FIRE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLE IN FAR NORTH***Background*

The most recent collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the City of Fort Worth and the Fort Worth Professional Firefighters Association, approved by City Council on October 21, 2014, allows the Fire Chief discretion to implement utilization of two-person emergency response companies to supplement existing four-person companies at specific stations where call volumes or other factors necessitate service expansion. Additionally, the agreement allows the Fire Chief discretion to exclude Fire Station 44 (dedicated exclusively to Meacham Airport) from the four-person staffing standard.

*Action Plan*

In an effort to better allocate Fire Department staffing and equipment resources, the Fire Chief plans to reduce fire service staffing at Fire Station 44 to a two-person staffing model and reallocate existing resources to staff a smaller, two-person emergency response vehicle at Fire Station 31 - currently a single company station, located at 4209 Longstraw Drive in far north Fort Worth (Council District 4). This fully-outfitted vehicle is currently in the department's fleet but without dedicated staffing. Both the Aviation and Fire Departments agree that a two-person staffing model at the fire station dedicated exclusively to Meacham Airport provides adequate coverage.

The utilization of a smaller, two-person vehicle to respond to primarily non-fire emergencies in high-call areas is a national trend and will allow for the following fire service and cost efficiency advantages:

- Ability to maximize staffing and equipment resource efficiencies and better scale response levels to match specific incident requirements;
- Additional emergency response resources in the far north, where call volume and response times warrant additional resources;
- Utilization of a smaller, more cost efficient, two-person emergency response vehicle at Fire Station 31 saves operating and maintenance costs compared with the larger fire apparatus and increases the fire engine operational life expectancy. Additionally, the maneuverability of the smaller vehicle has response time advantages in high-traffic areas such as the north corridor.

*Required Staffing Adjustments*

The CBA requires two-person companies be staffed with either a Captain or Lieutenant and an Engineer. Therefore, in order to fully implement the proposed plan, 6 vacant Firefighter positions will require re-purposing to meet this requirement.



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Page 2 of 3

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In the coming weeks, a staffing ordinance amendment will be forwarded for Council approval to delete 6 Firefighter positions, while adding 2 Engineers, 2 Lieutenants, and 2 Captains.

The following table shows the current and proposed number of Fire Department Civil Service positions by rank. The proposed amendments will not change the total number of civil service positions (908).

Rank	Current	Proposed	Change
Assistant Chief	3	3	
Deputy Chief	6	6	
Battalion Chief	27	27	
Captain	84	86	(+2)
Lieutenant	121	123	(+2)
Engineer	202	204	(+2)
Firefighter	465	459	(-6)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>908</b>	

*Cost Implications*

The replacement of 6 vacant Firefighter positions with 6 positions of higher rank will cost approximately \$182,000 annually.

As a partial offset to these costs, the ability to add a smaller, more cost effective, emergency response vehicle at Fire Station 31 will allow utilization of a vehicle with a much lower cost per mile to operate for a large percentage of calls. The cost-per-mile to operate Fire Engine 31 is \$2.63 per mile, compared with \$0.70 per mile for the smaller vehicle. It is estimated that the newly-created two-person company will allow Fire Engine 31 to travel approximately 13-15,000 fewer miles each year, saving approximately \$23-27,000 in vehicle operating cost and extend its life by an estimated 3 years.

In addition to extending the life expectancy of Fire Engine 31, there are other cost-avoidance considerations as well. With Fire Station 31's 3,610 annual response call volume, planning would ordinarily be underway to transition this station from a single to double company, which would essentially double the operating cost of the station. By reallocating existing resources and utilizing a two-person company and vehicle, the department is able to incrementally expand emergency response resources at a fraction of the cost to add a second four-person company (approximately \$2.2 million).



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Page 3 of 3

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The Fire Department is not requesting any additional resources for this proposal and is committed to absorbing any net cost increases.

*Summary*

With more flexible staffing options available to the Fire Chief in the new CBA, the Fire Department is able to address a growing need for additional emergency response resources in far north Fort Worth by reallocating existing resources. Net costs will be minimal and will require no additional budgetary allocations as operational efficiencies will partially offset required staffing costs.

**David Cooke  
City Manager**